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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 WELLINGTON 000866

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STATE FOR EAP/ANP; PACOM FOR JO1E/J2/J233/J5/SJFHQ; OSD FOR
JESSICA POWERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND AND US MIL-TO-MIL COOPERATION

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Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Margaret McKean; Reason 1,4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During a December 4-5 visit to New Zealand, OSD New Zealand Director Jessica Powers and PACOM New Zealand Desk Officer Rick Bairett reviewed US-NZ military cooperation, discussed the implementation of a new notification policy covering eight areas of mil-to-mil engagement, and Powers updated MOD officials on the status of the GNZ pending request to sell its inventory of A-4 planes. Both Air Vice Marshal David Bamfield and MOD Secretary John McKinnon underscored the importance the GNZ attaches to the successful resolution of the A-4 sale. Powers pressed GNZ officials on further commitments to Afghanistan; she allowed that DOD would work with the GNZ on addressing logistics concerns surrounding a renewed SAS deployment to Afghanistan. USG and GNZ officials discussed future activities for engagement and cooperation, and agreed to work closely to enhance cooperation within the region (through the ARF). New Zealand officials noted their efforts to encourage other countries to expand contributions in Afghanistan. End Summary.

A-4 Sale of Major Concern to GNZ

¶2. (C) In her opening call on Ministry of Defense Secretary John McKinnon, OSD Director Jessica Powers explained that her visit to New Zealand had two objectives: clarify the status of the A-4 sale and review the USG decision to move eight categories of military cooperation to a notification process within DOD to expedite planning facilitation. Powers introduced Major Rick Bairett from PACOM, and encouraged GNZ interlocutors to reach out to PACOM if there are questions surrounding GNZ participation in upcoming activities. Sec McKinnon welcomed the USG visitors and the opportunity to discuss the relationship in broad terms, noting that the GNZ owes the U.S. a response to the US decision regarding the notification process. The new arrangements, McKinnon continued, have been expected for some time and MOD is pleased that it's happened. He advised that both Minister of

Defense Phil Goff and Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters had both signed off on the document; PM Clark has been traveling for three weeks and simply has not yet had an opportunity to review the new procedures and draft press language. Minister Goff briefly referred to the policy during a recent trip to Canada.

¶3. (C) In moving to the pending A-4 sale, Powers prefaced her remarks by noting the issue is complex in that it involves a DOD Inspector General investigation; nothing that OSD does in terms of following up on the progress of the proposed sale can be perceived as interfering in the legal process. Powers related that she is aware the GNZ is considering another buyer of the planes; the State Department will consider the sale as long as the company in question has a USG contract. She noted that the proposed buyer is only one dimension of the sale; there is also the issue of DOD responsibility and potential liability for such planes, and this factor also has a bearing on the delay.

¶4. (C) McKinnon thanked Powers for the update and offered that Minister Goff is getting "quite agitated" about the A-4 issue. The GNZ appreciates the legal aspect of the ongoing application, said McKinnon, and opined that another buyer would probably be the preferred option for moving this issue forward. The Secretary emphasized that if another suitable company can be identified, the GNZ would appreciate expeditious processing of the request. Powers urged that the NZ Embassy in Washington work closely with OSD/DSCA on the A-4 issue.

Afghanistan: NZ to Stay "as Long as Necessary"

¶5. (C) On Afghanistan, McKinnon said that Ministers had recently agreed that New Zealand would continue its

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participation for another year. The one-year review is only a function the GNZ's internal administration process, said the DepSec, and he opined that New Zealand would continue its deployment "as long as it's necessary to do so." A Canadian independent panel recently visited the New Zealand PRT in Bamiyan, and Paul Sinclair said that GNZ officials stressed the importance of the Canadian contribution to Afghanistan and the need for the international community to stay the course in Afghanistan. McKinnon observed that Bamiyan has become synonymous with New Zealand, adding that the New Zealand government will review in early 2008 the whole spectrum of NZ assistance in Afghanistan as well as the prospect of a presence in Kabul.

¶6. (C) McKinnon noted that the number of security incidents in Bamiyan has risen recently, and that is a concern. What is not clear, he continued, is whether the problem stems from political or criminal problems; the GNZ has deployed personnel to assess the situation and make recommendations. Powers responded that continued New Zealand PRT assistance in Afghanistan is of great importance, and that the USG would welcome the return of the New Zealand Special Forces (SAS). She said that if the GNZ were to consider a redeployment to Afghanistan, the USG would prefer that the SAS conduct special operations rather than perimeter security for the Bamiyan PRT. The USG is cognizant of GNZ transportation concerns and competing demands for New Zealand Defense Forces in the south Pacific. She urged the MOD to identify constraints and work with the USG to resolve issues surrounding the SAS. McKinnon took the message on board, but noted that the decision rests with the Prime Minister.

¶7. (C) Powers asked if there were other military resources that might be considered -- trainers or Operational and Military Liaison Teams (OMLTs). McKinnon responded that the trainer issue was under consideration with particular attention to the availability of the relevant personnel. New Zealand was also looking at police training. Powers

suggested that New Zealand, in considering options beyond the Bamiyan PRT, look at the OMLTs, which interface between ISAF and the ANA in providing both training and operational support. Paul Sinclair said that the OMLT issue has been examined by GNZ officials, but has not been put forward to Ministers for a decision. McKinnon offered that the GNZ will review its Afghanistan contribution in the first half of 2008, looking at what others are doing and how New Zealand might mix in with other elements. Powers asked if the GNZ were planning to send an assessment team to Afghanistan, but McKinnon said there were no plans at present. Powers suggested that if a team were to go out, it would be useful for the team to stop at CENTCOM and in Washington. She also urged New Zealand to get the Singaporeans to do more in Afghanistan. Paul Sinclair said that Singapore is considering a GNZ request to place medical personnel in a Dutch-run hospital in Uruzgan province. In addition, New Zealand has approached Japan about the possibility of contributing to the Bamiyan PRT with engineers and medics. Powers was aware of the request to Japan, noting that the USG has encouraged Japan to do what it can.

Improved US-NZ Mil-to-Mil Cooperation

¶8. (C) In a broader meeting at the Ministry of Defense chaired by Director for International Defense Relations Paul Sinclair, Powers and Bairrett met with Director of Defense Intelligence Kevin Arledge, MFAT Division of the Americas Senior Policy Officer Justin Fepuleai, Director of Strategic Commitments Ian Gore, Director of Defense Policy and Planning Wayne Higgins, Warren Whiting (his replacement) and MFAT's Security and Disarmament Division's Rick Prendergast. Paul Sinclair praised the increased tempo of bilateral visits and mil-to-mil interaction over the past year, and welcomed the recent USG notification policy decision for the eight areas of engagement. Powers and Bairrett discussed various upcoming operations with officials, including a possible Te Mata long distance training linkup while the ship is en route to the

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Mideast, a Proliferation Security Initiative exercise (Maru in September 2008) in which PAC Fleet and the US Coast Guard will participate depending on how much of the exercise will be in port or in international waters. Ian Gore said that the detail of the exercise will be worked out during the Operational Experts Groups (OEG) meeting in London in early ¶2008.

¶9. (C) Activities in Dili involving US and NZ forces may also fall within the eight categories, and both sides agreed that there could be opportunities there. Bairrett offered that Australia has asked PACOM to do more in Dili; the U.S. will be deploying Marines to Timor Leste next year. Powers and Bairrett agreed that PACOM would keep New Zealand in the loop on military planning for exercises and training in Dili. Paul Sinclair said that the New Zealand police in Dili spend the majority of their time mentoring other members of the international UN police contingent, as opposed to working with the Timor police. The UN, continued Sinclair, has recommended that the New Zealand defense forces liaise with the Timor police but New Zealand does not believe military should do police work. Just as in Afghanistan, there is a weakness in the international police development efforts in Dili, agreed USG and GNZ officials.

¶10. (C) Powers noted that before the recent USG policy decision, operators on the US side often assumed the answer regarding joint mil-mil activities with New Zealand would be negative, and therefore they would not pursue permission; others would wait until the last minute to propose activities. Now OSD and PACOM need to ensure the questions are asked early and that communication with GNZ operators is encouraged; Powers said that the USG would welcome feedback from the GNZ as to how the new policy is working. Major Bairrett noted that Admiral Keating had wanted a PACOM

official to visit New Zealand as Rear Admiral Ledson will be exploring a possible PAC Fleet visit to New Zealand in April 2008. Paul Sinclair requested that the instructions provided by OSD to US commands be given to the New Zealand Ministry of Defense so that parallel instructions are handed down to New Zealand counterparts. Powers agreed to explore the possibility. Bairrett and Sinclair discussed the need to arrive at a common definition of third-party hosted operations, as it is not always clear as to sponsorship. Paul Sinclair raised the issue of a NZ liaison officer at PACOM, as had been proposed by New Zealand during the previous visits of Brigadier General Toolan and DASD Clad. Powers noted that the U.S. owes New Zealand a response on this issue. She suggested that given New Zealand's current list of activities for 2008, it may be worth sending a GNZ official to PACOM every six months for a discussion on opportunities for greater collaboration. Regular PACOM contact through Rick Bairrett is another area for enhancing PACOM-New Zealand coordination and dialogue.

11. (C) Bairrett said that the USG would like to see the ARF do more, particularly on maritime security. He added that the US does not have to be in the lead all the time and would welcome other partners pushing the ARF to assume greater ownership of this issue. New Zealand officials agreed, noting that the GNZ is like minded and would like to see more defense dialogue within the ARF.

Comment

12. (C) GNZ officials were very appreciative of the visit by Jessica Powers and Rick Bairrett, particularly the update on the status of the A-4 sale, which is increasingly of concern to senior GNZ officials and a potential bilateral irritant. Representatives of the various MOD offices welcomed the opportunity to discuss the recent USG policy shift from an operator/technical level, and the impact on scheduled and planned activities over the next year. Both US and NZ officials agreed that with the change in USG policy, improved lines of communication are necessary as the bilateral mil-to-mil relationship has shifted accordingly.

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To that end, GNZ officials were pleased to meet Major Bairrett and discuss enhanced NZ-PACOM coordination. End Comment.

13. (U) OSD Director Powers has cleared this message.
Keegan